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INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Activities of the North Korean Bureau of Internal Affairs in Seoul

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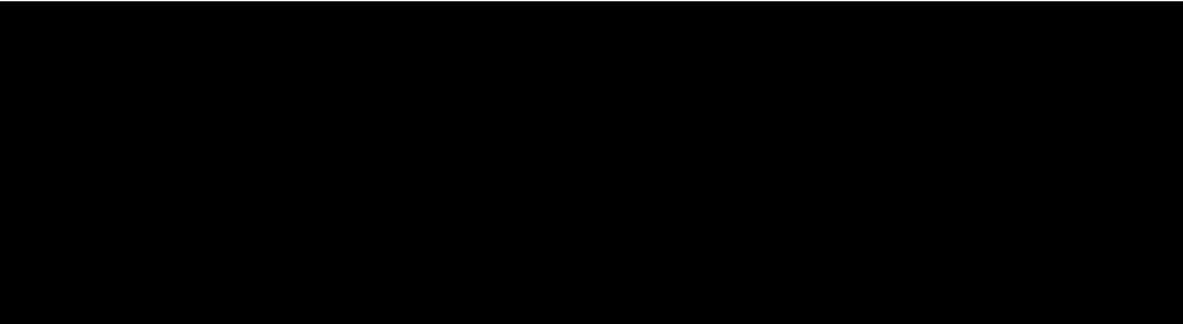
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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.



1. On 10 January 1951, five days after the North Korean forces entered Seoul, nine offices of the North Korean Internal Affairs Bureau were established in the city. They occupy former Republic of Korea police bureau buildings in central Seoul, Chongno, Songbuk, Songdong, Tongdaemun, Sodaemun, Mapo, Yongsan, and Yongsungpo. According to an official of the Chongno office, the central headquarters for Seoul are at the Chongno Internal Affairs Bureau and are under the direction of KIM P'a (金保).
2. One hundred staff members for the Internal Affairs Bureau were sent to Seoul by the North Korean Ministry of National Defense. On 20 January, ten of these persons were assigned to each branch of the Bureau in Seoul and the remaining ten to the headquarters. These personnel serve as, respectively, bureau heads; chiefs of the security, inspection, garrison, cultural, defense, sanitation, education, and confidential affairs sections; and one miscellaneous official. Bureau heads attend a daily conference at headquarters and spend most of their time outside their own offices. In their absence, the head of the security section acts as bureau chief. In comparison with similar Bureau organizations in North Korea, these offices in Seoul are more economically arranged, with fewer personnel.
3. On 21 January, the section chiefs began to organize their individual units. Each had brought some North Korean personnel with him, and other employees were found among acquaintances or through recommendations from acquaintances. Persons employed locally are not allowed to return to their homes but are kept at the office, given three meals daily (each consisting of rice and a bowl of soup), and compelled to work on the office floor, without desks. Organization work was completed by 30 January. The Chongno Internal Affairs Bureau then, for example, had 50 members, including the ten staff from North Korea and 40 miscellaneous employees. Staff members wear North Korean army uniforms and carry pistols; other employees are not armed and wear ordinary civilian clothes. In both appearance and attitude, since the staff give orders and the other personnel of the North Korean employees are easily distinguished from the indigenous personnel.

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4. Units for maintaining public order were organized in each district of Seoul by a small number of local residents and persons released from Hango, Sodamun and Yi T'ae Won (梨花院) Army Prisons. As soon as the Internal Affairs Bureaus were formed, these public order units were placed under the chief of the local security sections. Unit members are, in effect, low-level employees of the Internal Affairs Bureau. Thus by 30 January, the Chongno unit had 200 members and a staff appointed by the Chongno security section chief. These officials concealed their true names and addressed one another only as Comrade KIM or Comrade YI.
5. Between 7 and 30 January, the Internal Affairs Bureaus reached a total employment figure of 2,260, including the 100 North Korean staff members, 360 local employees, and 1,800 public order unit personnel. In addition, an unknown number of secret agents was directly employed by the chief of the defense section of the Internal Affairs Bureau.
6. The functions of public order units are to guard the Internal Affairs Bureau, its branch offices, and other important places and to protect important officials; to regulate traffic; to conduct patrols; to take required emergency action (not specified under what circumstances); and to repair and construct air-raid shelters and barricades. Unit members are authorized to investigate, question, and arrest persons but are not authorized to conduct executions. In late January, unit personnel were so greatly disturbed by UN air raids that they could hardly keep order and were unable to do their work systematically. They were trying, however, to locate and report weapons, cameras, telescopes, and radios, and they often confiscate these articles when discovered. Individual unit members have no definite assignments but are instructed to report constantly and in detail on conditions in their neighborhoods.
7. Persons reported to the Internal Affairs Bureau by the public order units are often subjected to immediate punishment without explanation or investigation. For example, when an agent reported that a local woman was the wife of a low-level member of the Northwest Youth Corps who had fled to Pusan, she was immediately imprisoned as a member of the Corps and her house was confiscated and occupied by the informer. Most ROK government officials and UN sympathizers fled the city before the North Koreans entered, but any who remain and any persons believed to have assisted the UN are subject to imprisonment or execution. Order of priority for their arrest is ROK intellectuals, ROK government officials, and wealthy persons.
8. For example, a man of some means had fled the city, leaving an elderly woman relative to take care of his house in Seoul. On 10 January a North Korean non-commissioned officer and a soldier ordered the woman out of the house on the grounds that the owner had grown rich by exploiting the people and drove her off with only a small amount of food, stating that since she was a relative of the rich man she must suffer. Other instances were noted of women left to look after property being evicted without being permitted to remove anything from their homes. Arrests were made of individuals who had served the UN interest, even of shopkeepers whose principal customers had been foreigners, and of persons found reading English books.
9. One of the functions of the public order unit is the control of movement from Seoul into the countryside. Up to 30 January there was no formal travel permit, but a traveler obtained a hand-written statement from an army company commander of the head of an Internal Affairs Bureau and signed by the head of the Central Internal Affairs Bureau, in the following form:

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Native place:

Present address:

Name:

Age:

I hereby permit the above-named comrade to travel from Seoul to Sunan area during the seven-day period from 20 January to 27 January to post cultural propaganda posters.

20 January 1951

KIM Il-su (金一水) (seal)

Head of Central Internal Affairs Bureau

10. It was observed, however, that the certificates were less effective travel permits than certain missions or items being carried. The person with the cultural posters was allowed to proceed because of his mission, and men carrying ammunition but without permits were allowed to pass when travelers with certificates but without missions were kept from leaving Seoul. Checks are made at various points on roads leading out of the city. Groups of three members of local public order units or occasionally non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the North Korean army stop departing travelers and question them, asking the following: Where is your home? Where are you going and why? Have you a man in your family? Where is he, and what is he doing now?

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